



Morning Alert - Wednesday, May 23, 2018

The following information reflects the reporting of the cited news media and does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Japan Media Highlights is intended for USG use only and should not be forwarded. Visit the website [here](#). For more information, contact [TokyoMATT@state.gov](mailto:TokyoMATT@state.gov).

## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that President Trump hinted at the possible postponement of the U.S.-DPRK summit, airing video of him saying: "There are certain conditions that we want, and I think we'll get those conditions. But if we don't, we don't have the meeting... It may not work out for June 12." All commercial networks led with reports on a press conference held yesterday by a member of the Nihon University American football team who tackled the Kwansei Gakuin quarterback from behind long after he had thrown a pass. In the press conference, he said he was instructed by his coaches to "crush" the opposing team's quarterback.

Mainichi, Yomiuri, and Sankei gave top play to reports on yesterday's press conference by a Nihon University football player, while Asahi led with a report on Prime Minister Abe's denial that he met with the director of Kake Gakuen on Feb. 25, 2015. Nikkei gave top coverage to a plan by Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance to enter the Chinese market by acquiring a nearly 40% stake in the life insurance unit of a state-owned Chinese bank.

## INTERNATIONAL

### President Trump hints at the possible postponement of the DPRK summit

Asahi wrote that according to a Reuters report, President Trump commented on his planned summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the outset of his meeting with South Korean President Moon at the White House on Tuesday by reportedly saying that the planned summit could be cancelled or postponed unless certain conditions are met. The paper wrote that according to the presidential office of South Korea, President Moon held separate talks with Secretary of State Pompeo and National Security Advisor Bolton ahead of his meeting with President Trump. Yomiuri and Nikkei wrote that President Moon reportedly urged the Secretary and the National Security

Advisor to move forward with preparations for the planned U.S.-DPRK summit by saying that Kim Jong Un's desire to make the planned summit a success is clear despite his regime's recent negative moves.

### **GOJ welcomes planned nuclear site dismantlement by North Korean**

Nikkei wrote that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented at a press briefing on Tuesday on North Korea's planned dismantlement of the Punggye-ri nuclear site this week by saying that Japan welcomes it as another positive move following the inter-Korean summit in April. Suga added that Japan hopes the move will lead to "complete, verifiable, and irreversible" denuclearization by the DPRK.

In a related development, Mainichi wrote from Seoul that journalists from the United States, the UK, China, and Russia arrived in North Korea on Tuesday to observe the dismantling of the Punggye-ri nuclear test site, but eight journalists from two South Korean media outlets gave up on making the trip because Pyongyang refused to let them enter the country.

## **SECURITY**

### **U.S. mulls changing the name of Pacific Command to Indo-Pacific Command**

Yomiuri wrote from Washington that it has learned from a source connected to the U.S. military that the United States is mulling the idea of changing the name of the U.S. Pacific Command to Indo-Pacific Command to better characterize the responsibilities it exercises from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. The paper speculated that the Trump administration plans to promote its "Indo-Pacific strategy" by strengthening cooperation with Japan, Australia, and India in view of China's maritime advancement and that renaming the command may help it to demonstrate the importance it attaches to the strategy. Sankei ran a similar report quoting Pentagon spokesperson Manning as indicating on Monday the possibility of renaming the command.

### **GOJ confirms policy of deploying Aegis Ashore**

Asahi wrote that the GOJ approved at a cabinet meeting on Tuesday a document on its plan to deploy the Aegis Ashore system and start operating it in fiscal 2023, saying that it will continue to move forward with preparations for the deployment. The GOJ prepared the document in response to an inquiry from independent lawmaker Manabu Terada. He asked whether the GOJ's views on the DPRK situation have changed in light of Pyongyang's recent conciliatory moves since the GOJ decided last December to deploy the system in view of "the imminent threat posed by North Korea." Nikkei ran a similar report.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Japan, Argentina reach agreement on beef trade**

Yomiuri wrote that Foreign Minister Kono and his Argentinian counterpart Faurie agreed at a meeting in Buenos Aires on Tuesday that Japan and Argentina will move forward with procedures to enable them to export beef to each other's countries starting in late July.

---

